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Special thanks to Anoulay Tsai, Mai Kiyotaki, Aaron Webber, Michael Cisneros, Sandra Jo, and everyone at Sega for their invaluable assistance.

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Ted Adams, IDW Founder



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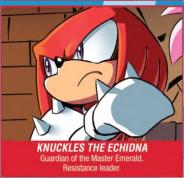


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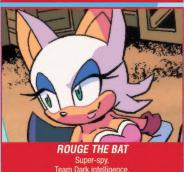




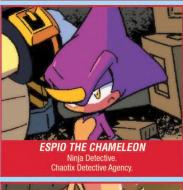


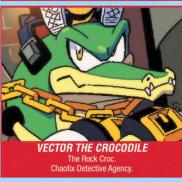










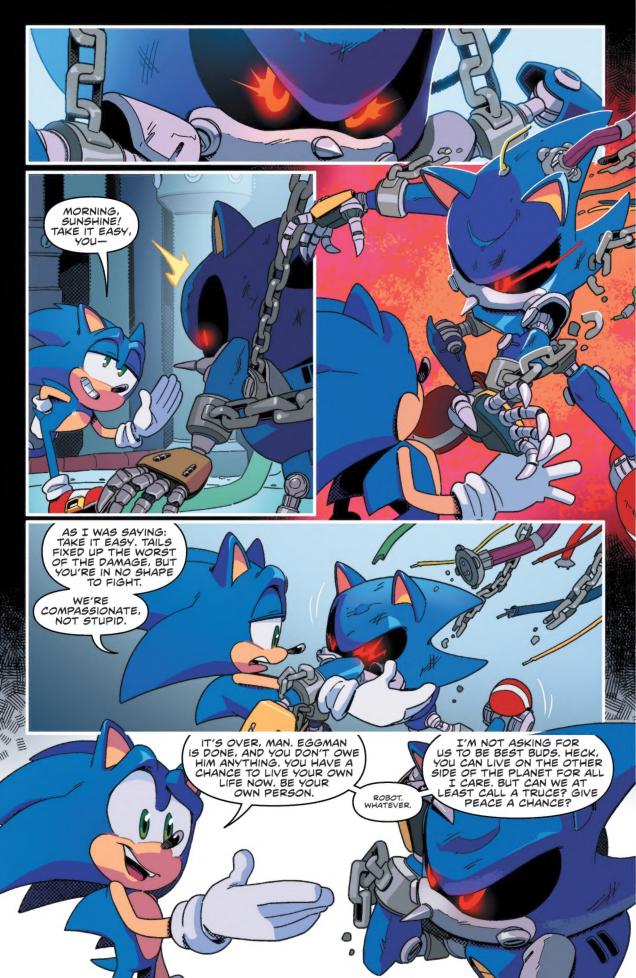
















































































SONIC LETTERS SQUAD

What's up, Squad? Hope you enjoyed issue #12, the thrilling fallout (hey, that was our first arc) of "The Battle of Angel Island," once more by the talented team of lan Flynn, Evan Stanley, Tracy Yardley!, Matt Herms, and Shawn

Lee! BUT this time, as we're gearing up for Sonic Season 2 with issue #13, we thought we'd do something a little bit different than our usual letters: An interview with artist Evan Stanley about designing Sonic characters!

IDW: Hey Evan, thank you for talking to us! We're twelve issues into IDW Sonic and boy, what a run it's been already. What's been your favorite part so far?

Evan: Well as an artist, my fave so far has been Issue 8; I've got a soft spot for Silver, and getting to introduce Whisper was a blast. As a fan, I think Issue 6 is my favorite so far; it was cool to see Sonic make some tough choices—and defend them!



Out of the first 12 issues, you've been on interiors for five of them and have had a chance to design two new characters—Whisper the Wolf and Dr. Starline. Let's talk about Whisper first as she's been around a little bit longer. One of her most notable features is her mask, where did that come from?

One of my favorite costume items in Sonic Forces is the kitsune mask, and when I learned that Whisper was a mysterious and reserved person, I thought a similar mask might work for her. Ian Flynn saw the mask concept and had the idea of making it also serve as a

sniper scope and wisp communication device, which instantly clicked; now you can't imagine her without it! The mask became an extension of her personality, her fighting style, and her larger story arc. It's a great example of a design element that not only illustrates the character's personality, but enriches the character's story. That's the ideal outcome of a collaborative process like this.





Besides her mask and clothing, one of the really cool things you got to do with Whisper was design her variable wispon. Can you tell us about designing equipment to serve all of her wisp companions?

I think I got lucky with the Variable Wispon—I'm not super great at visualizing mechanical objects, and it's a crazy Swiss Army knife of a weapon! From a readthrough of the script, I knew that it primarily served as a rifle, so that'd be the core shape. Next, I built parts of the in-game wispons into it, using their shapes to complete the "sniper rifle" silhouette. Lastly, I used the motif of a Wisp Capsule to provide a visual focus, and an easy place for Whisper's team to swap out in plain view. The weapon doesn't transform so much as Whisper just holds it differently; I visualized how I'd want to hold an umbrella or hammer, made sure she'd have places to put her hands, and that that was it!



When we showed off your designs for Whisper at the San Diego Comic-Con panel, it seems like people started drawing their own interpretations immediately. What's the experience been seeing her be picked up by the fan community?

I've seen people working with my designs in the past, so I kind of knew what to expect—but Whisper is by far the most positively-received character I've designed yet! All the attention was a bit overwhelming, but I'm glad so many people felt a connection to her!

Now, to briefly shift gears a little, at this point you are the only person to draw all five of the new characters from Season 1 (Tangle, Rough, Tumble, Whisper, and Dr. Starline). While you designed Whisper and Starline, Tyson Hesse designed the other three characters. What's the experience like working off of another artist's designs?

I've been a fan of Tyson's work ever since reading Boxer Hockey online way back when, so it's a treat to get to work with his designs. He did some really nice stuff with fur patterns to help describe the characters' forms—I especially like Tumble for that. The biggest challenge was interpreting the details in a way that'd look natural next to my version of Sonic and Co., but that's something I've always gotta do when I'm handling a new design.

Also, THANK YOU for including shoe sole designs on the character sheets. So often it's a massive drag to track down good sole refs for Sonic peeps!

Let's talk about Dr. Starline. As is often the case, there were several rounds of edits on his design, including some that looked wildly different. Can you explain what that process is like? Does it become harder or easier to find that final design as you're given more notes?

Starline was tricky to nail down—I started off by narrowing my options a bit too fast, getting caught up in details, and the first few rounds of criticisms boiled down to a "hmm, I dunno". Only after I loosened up and went back to exploring what makes his personality shine did I find something exciting, but that wouldn't have been possible without the previous iterations first focusing the concept. Personally, I LOVE notes. Finding creative solutions to a design's requirements is what I like doing







best; leave me alone with no parameters and I'm lost. It's my job to find the ideal combination of everyone's ideas on the creative team, and to do that I need as much feedback as I can get!

(The trick is to never submit an idea that you don't personally like, so even if your team doesn't pick your favorite, it'll still be something up your alley.)

IDW: What were some of your major design inspirations when creating Dr. Starline?

Ooh, I pulled from a bunch of sources... but I describe the final design as Jareth the Goblin King meets steampunk Benjamin Franklin, with a touch of Michael Jackson's *Thriller*.



IDW: Who is your favorite artist and have you been influenced your own style—in comics, in visual storytelling, in character design—by their art?

My first memory of seeing comics was at three or so, when I encountered a bookshelf three times my height full of *Calvin and Hobbes* collections—I couldn't read, but I instantly fell in love with the strip. Bill Watterson's style and approach to visual storytelling made a permanent impact on me. I've drawn all my life, but I didn't start making comics myself until I was around 13. When I did, I was looking at Sonic art and its influences to learn… there's a whole legacy of artists and tangential sources there, but I think I've learned the most from Tracy Yardley. Yes, hi Tracy, you're excellent!



IDW: How does it feel having characters you designed become part of a new Sonic canon?

It's a thrill, and an honor! When I started making comics I never let myself even dream that I'd get to be here, helping create the next chapter in my favorite story ever.

Thanks so much, Evan! That was very interesting! Hopefully we all understand the design process a bit better and see how challenging and rewarding it can be to create new characters!

That's it for this time! Don't forget to send your art and letters to letters@idwpublishing.com, and make sure to mark them: "OKAY TO PRINT!" We'll see you next issue with the start of the next great Sonic adventure! A *Sonic Adventure 2*, if you will!





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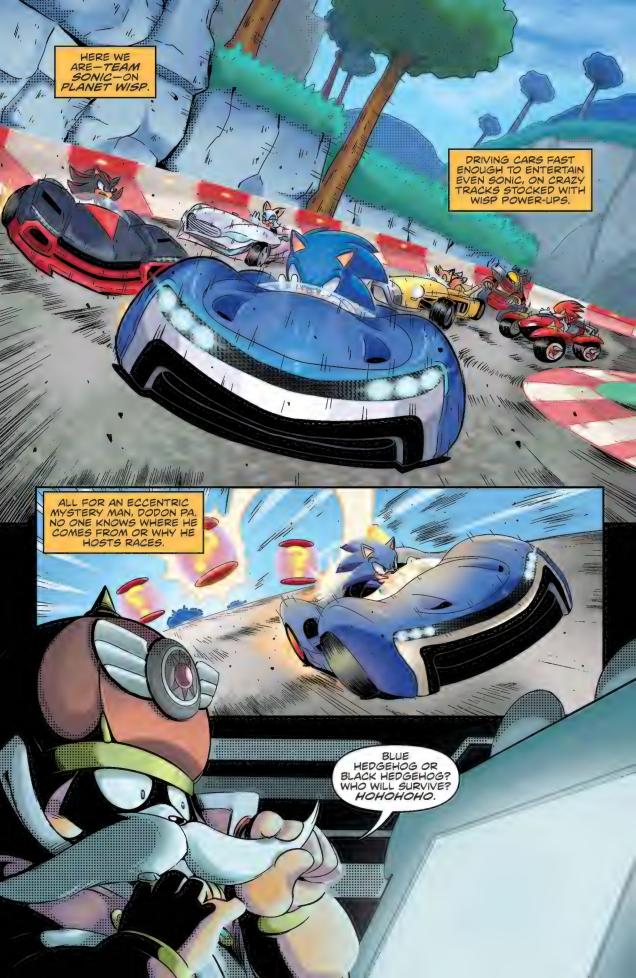


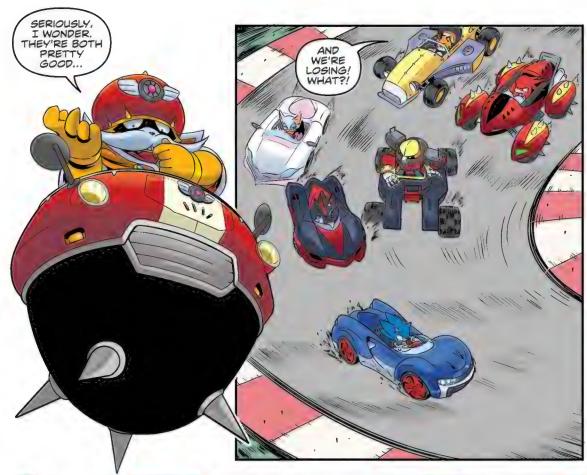






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